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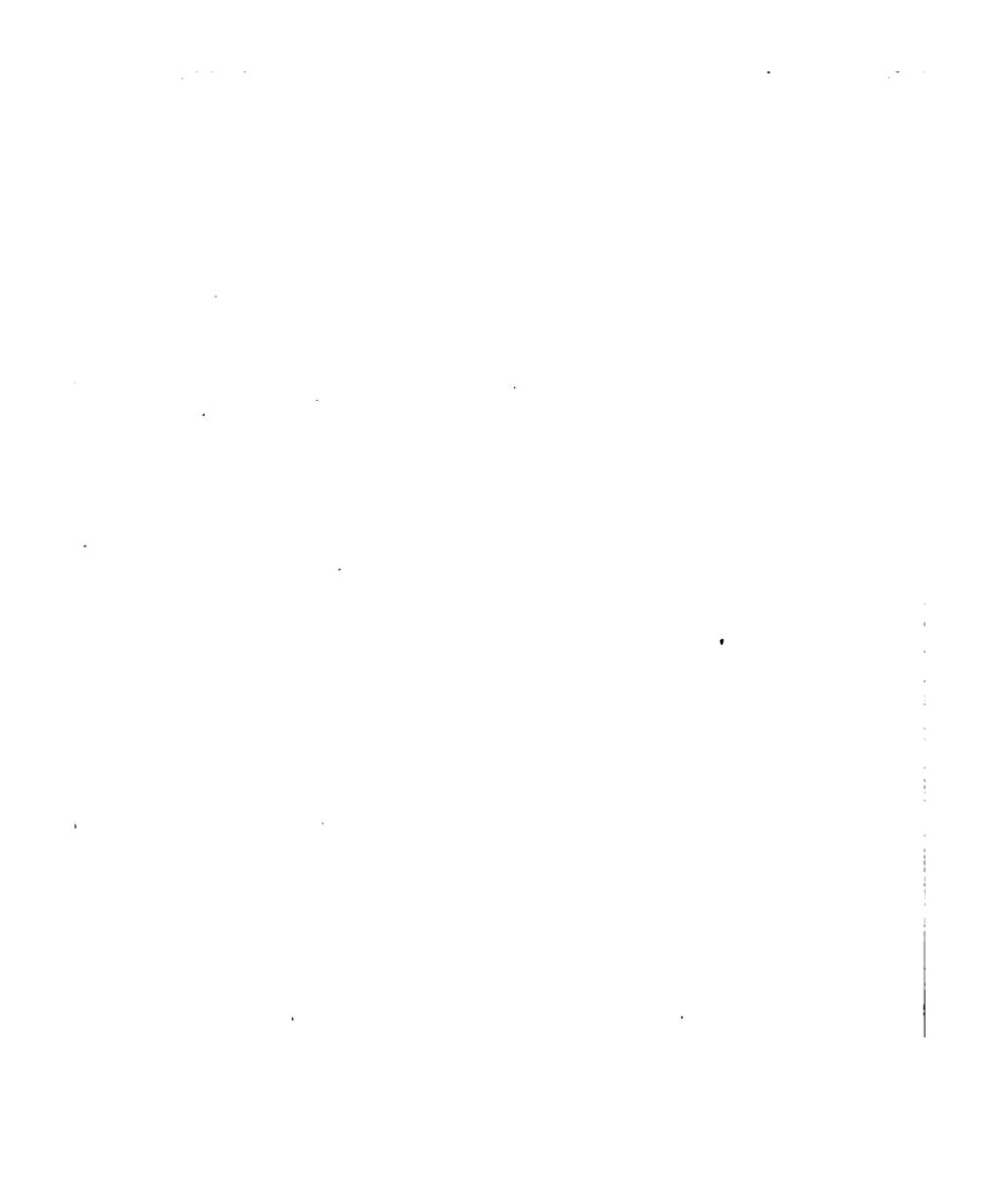
*INSTRUCTIONS IN THE  
WAY OF PEACE*

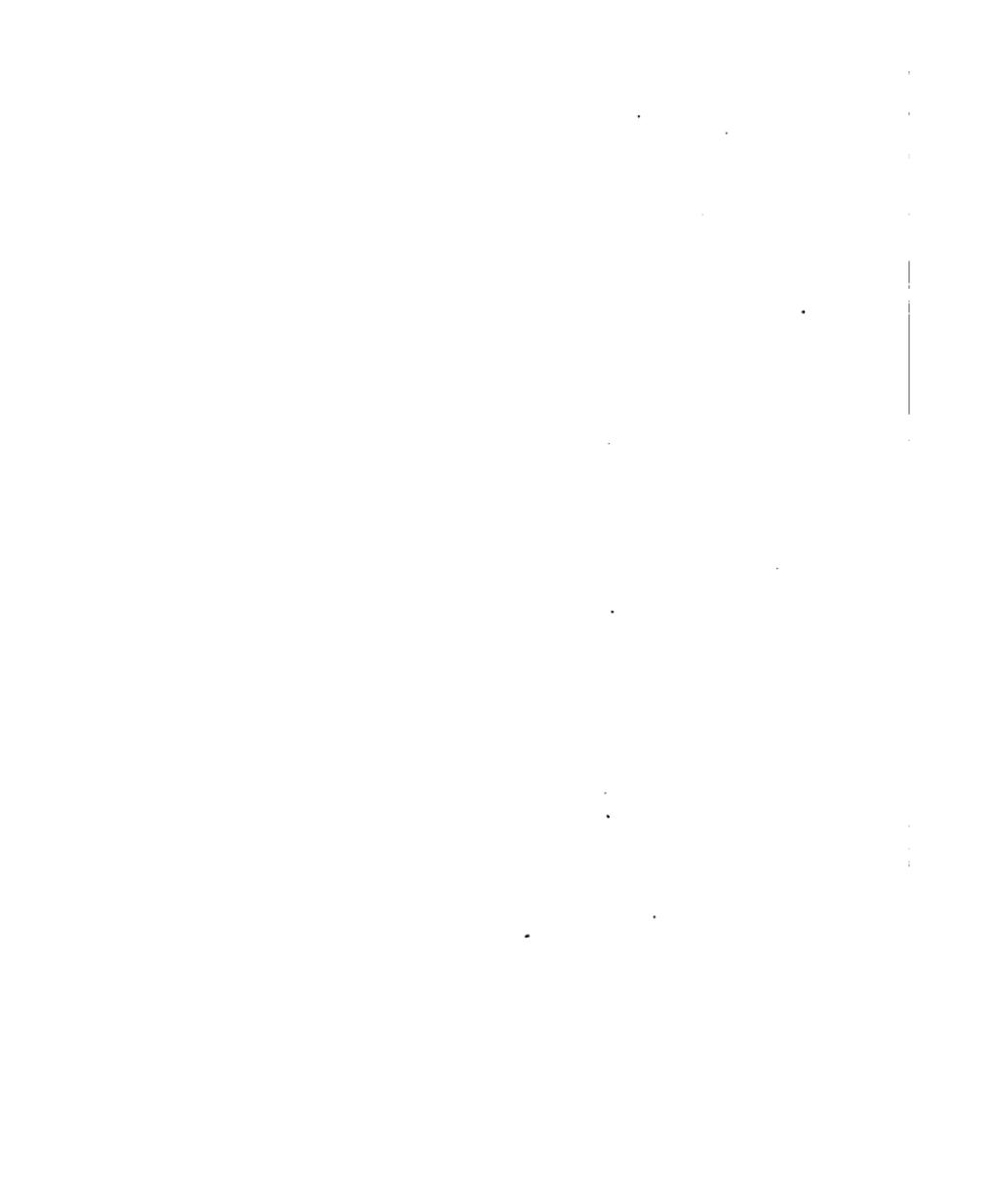




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INSTRUCTIONS  
IN  
THE WAY OF PEACE.

BY THE  
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## INTRODUCTION.

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THESE Instructions in the Way of Peace are not intended to embrace a complete summary of this all-important subject, but to contain hints and suggestions for those who are seeking to know Him 'Who is our Peace.' They naturally contain thoughts gathered through a somewhat long experience, which may be found more fully and forcibly expressed elsewhere; but if they are only the means of leading some to clearer and more practical views, all will rejoice that these fragments have been put together in a mosaic of God's truth. The higher life of 'Power,' through an indwelling Christ, does not form a part of these Instructions, but may hereafter be treated separately, as supplying a need in the present day, and as a proper and rightful sequence of the teaching of these pages.



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## INSTRUCTIONS IN THE WAY OF PEACE.

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### *I.—The Work of the Holy Spirit.*

THE Way of Salvation, or the way we take in order that we may be saved, is surely the most important way we can know; yet it is the way concerning which more mistakes are made than upon any other, and it is a way which the theories of men have considerably clouded, and over which the thick mists of unbelief have ever hung.

If we wished to go to some distant land, we should be continually studying the chart, and be making inquiry from those who had a knowledge of the route and the requirements for the journey. Surely, then, in this 'way' whereby heaven is gained, we want to study our Bible-

chart, and ask the 'way to Zion, with our faces thitherward,' from those who have travelled on the road themselves, and who can guide us, not by theory, but by their own experience. This 'Way of Salvation' is made perfectly clear in God's Holy Word. A 'wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein.' We have no need to use symbol and metaphor in describing it; we have far more need to take the strict words of Scripture as our guide, and to follow them implicitly, believing that what God says He means, and accepting what He declares as our 'article of faith.' The 'Way of Salvation' began with God, in the inscrutable counsels of eternity, wherein the redemptive work was planned; and it leads back to God, when the 'multitude which no man can number' shall take their places as the 'redeemed out of every nation,' and join in the song—'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.' It is not our purpose to discuss the question, which has so disturbed the seeking soul and rent the unity of the Christian Church, as to our position by Baptism in this way of salvation, how far God's Spirit operates in the soul thus brought into the covenant, and how He acts and works in those who are unregenerate. That we are by Baptism brought into covenant relationship with God, there can be no more question than that the Jewish children were thus brought; and it is because

we thus claim for our children as we solemnly dedicate them to God the blessings of the covenant which God has made with us in Christ, that we the more confidently approach God as our Father, and claim from Him all other blessings which He has to bestow. We pass on to the time when, as our spiritual sense is awakened, we begin to inquire for ourselves what part we have and where we stand in this way of salvation. It is not sufficient for us then to say, 'I am baptized and confirmed, and therefore I am safe,' for an uneasy and restless feeling within us contradicts that assurance. As our natural powers are awakening, and looking out on the great world wonderingly, we are beginning to ask the meaning of the problems of human existence; and an awakening *conscience* begins to ask the meaning of this most awful mystery:—'In what relation do I personally and consciously stand to God?' Such inquiry. a question came to the Lord Jesus Himself from the wise councillor, Nicodemus, when, by night, he sought the Great Teacher, and Christ unfolded to him in simple words the story of the serpent-bitten multitude, who, by looking to the God-ordained brazen serpent uplifted, were made whole; and He showed that just as that was an act of faith and obedience, so as the Son of man is lifted up shall all who look 'not perish, but have everlasting

life.\* Just such a direction was given to the Ethiopian eunuch, who had long been seeking to know the truth, and whose steps had been led to the centre of worship at Jerusalem to find what he wanted ; but who was returning (as so many return from places of worship and solemn ordinances still) unsatisfied, and was met by a God-sent messenger—a Mission Preacher, as Philip would have probably been called in these days—and the ‘Way of Salvation’† was pointed out to him from the very Scriptures he had often doubtless read, but had never understood. ‘All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord *hath* laid upon Him the iniquity of us all.’ As the look of Nicodemus was directed by faith to a work of God’s appointment, whereby the ‘lifting up’ should heal the many cast down ; so was the mind of the Ethiopian eunuch directed to the *work done*, whereby the ‘iniquity of us all’ was laid on the ‘Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world,’ for ‘by His stripes we are healed.’

As the conscience is awakened to a sense of need, and the mind, yearning for an intelligent knowledge of salvation, begins its work of inquiry, it is constrained to escape from the danger of the Sodom state, living in the

\* St. John, iii. 14, 15.      † Acts, viii. 30, 31.

city of destruction, however fair and well-placed it may be ; and it has no hesitation in accepting the help of those who are sent to bring souls in danger to a place of refuge. There were in Sodom four people to bring out, and two angels were sent, so that there was a hand for each ; and these two angels had a Divine commission, and knew what the way of salvation was which these people needed to walk. So will the direction ever be according to the mind of God, and no 'Way of Salvation' of man's direction or ingenuity will ever avail ; it must simply be the direction of those who take the Word of God as their guide, and give instructions therefrom.

When the Saviour was about to leave His disciples, He told them it was 'expedient' He should go <sup>Work of</sup> away, for He should be able to send the Spirit <sup>Spirit.</sup> to them. 'And when He is come,' Jesus added, 'He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment : of sin, because they believe not on Me ; of righteousness, because I go to the Father and ye see Me no more ; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.\* The first work, then, of the Holy Spirit is to 'convince of sin ;' when, therefore, the conscience is no longer easy, and the soul is no longer satisfied with its present condition, *some* power is bringing about that

\* St. John, xvi. 8, 10.

condition. There are only two powers acting on the spiritual battle-field, viz., on the one side the power of evil, 'for we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world;'<sup>\*</sup> and on the other side the power of God, for the 'Spirit lusteth against the flesh;'<sup>†</sup> and the Apostle bids us 'put on the whole armour of God.'<sup>‡</sup> If, then, this conviction of sin comes not from the evil power, which none of us could suppose, it must come from God, and therefore is a proof that He has sent that Spirit to enable us to take the *first step* in the way of salvation.

What is that step? To be *convinced of sin*! But what **First step**: sin? Is it such a sin as drunkenness, fornication, blasphemy, lying? Yes; any or all of these: but these are only branches of the one great stock of sin. The things left undone are just as evil as the things done—nay, it would seem in God's Word that the 'wrapping the talent in the napkin,' the neglect of things eternal, as in the case of Dives, and the failure to see Christ in His sick and needy, as at the judgment-reckoning of St. Matt. xxv., lead as assuredly to the outer darkness and the 'place of torment,' as do sins which the world calls vulgar or heinous. No; it is not

\* Eph. vi. 12.    † Gal. v. 17.    ‡ Eph. vi. 11.

*sins* that can ruin the soul, but a refusal to accept the God-made *remedy* for sin. The soul that goes on carelessly, and thinks it will all come right at last, or that, refusing to learn, and 'being ignorant of God's righteousness, goes about to establish its own righteousness,'\* is sinning just as much as though it committed some flagrant sin ; and the Holy Spirit convinces of this form of sin in the 'unbelief, because they believe not on Me.' *To believe*, is to see in Christ the condemnation of sin, and its full, perfect, and complete propitiation—to accept God's remedy for sin ; *not to believe*, is to make God a liar, for it is refusing to accept the record God has given us of His Love to us through His Son. As soon as the soul realises sin in this aspect, and sees that the God-given remedy has been neglected, that though Christ has died for our sins we are not delivered from them, for we will not receive the gift of pardon through Him, because we see not the work complete,—the Holy Spirit takes us the second stage, and 'convinces of righteousness,' not ours, but His ; that He has by His own most perfect sacrifice wrought out a righteousness which, like the wedding garment, He *gives* to all who are willing to come to the feast ; not leaving us something to do to win or deserve it, but as He says, 'I go to the

\* Rom. x. 3.

Father, and ye see Me no more : ' so He bore to the Father and still shows there the very marks of the wounds He received in the fight, a fight in which He was conqueror ; and as ' our sins are laid upon Him,' so we obtain His righteousness, for we are justified in Him ! And lest, while we are willing to claim His righteousness, we are yet cast down at the thought of the unequal warfare we have still to wage, the Spirit once more '*conf-*  
*Third step: vinces of judgment*, because the prince of judgment. this world *is* judged ;' not *shall* be, but 'has been' or 'is' in Christ. The fear of his attacks is taken away, because ' perfect love casts out fear ;' in Christ we are sheltered in the cleft of the rock, around which the winds and waves may rage and beat, but *we* are safe : the prince of the world is weakened, the serpent's head is bruised, and we all know the serpent cannot recover from a *head* wound.

Thus the first operation of the Spirit of God as He begins to move in the soul, is to open out before us a way of salvation sure and clear, and to bid us in His Power move along it. To put it in easy terms : some power is *drawing* you like the sun draws the flowers—you can hardly resist that influence of love ;—that is (*a*) *God the Father*, Who by the death of His Son has nothing against you, and Who beseeches you to be re-

conciled to Him. There is some power *pushing* you ; it is as though some one was forcing you forward even against your inclination ;—that is (*b*) God the Holy Spirit, who is working within us. But between us and the love of the Father there are barriers and hindrances which the devil places ; and these (*c*) God the Son has overcome by His Cross, and now is interceding to remove from us. This is the work already going on for us and in us, and all I have to do is to yield myself to this blessed influence.

I may resist if I will, and choose my own way and will rather than that to which I am being drawn. Power of This turns a hopeful state into a doubtful one, resistance. and places me in danger, for I am neglecting and despising the only way whereby I can be saved. That man, on a dangerous piece of rock surrounded by the tide may escape, if with the rope thrown to him from the cliff he will leap when directed as the water rises ; let him miss the opportunity, and as the water recedes he will be dashed upon the rock. The vessel may ride over the impeding bar at high water, but will be stranded when the water goes down. So, if we have the smallest inclination towards reaching the place of safety, and if our will goes towards it, all we have to do is to advance in the way of salvation ; as we obey the command to

rise, the power is given to us. The man at Bethesda's pool, who had been there eight-and-thirty years, was told to take up his bed and walk.\* As he obeyed, power was given. Many of us, perhaps, have been lying by the pool of Christian ordinance many and many a year, waiting for we know not what : Jesus stands by our side and says, 'Rise, take up thy bed and walk ; do that which seems to thee impossible ; take up that bad habit, that old sin, that stubborn prejudice upon which thou hast been lying these many years ; and instead of being a crawling, creeping, crippled soul, walk in the way of life with freedom and joy.' As He bids thee, make the effort ; the prize is worth the battle ; the blessing is worth the surrender. God is with thee, God is before thee, God is just now holding back the hindrance. Thy chain shall be broken—thou shalt go free ; the way of salvation shall be a reality to thee. It is His Power that draws thee ; yield thyself to that power, and thou shalt know the glorious liberty of His children.

\* St. John, v. 5.

## II.—THE SOUL AT REST.

**A**S soon as the soul is awakened to concern as to its state, and begins to listen to the voice that has perhaps long been speaking, it has entered on the state of conviction. The senseless condition in <sup>soul</sup> which it has been is exchanged for anxiety, <sup>soul</sup> convicted. sometimes deep, at other times only partial, but it is a sign of life, be the action small or great ; the first breath detected and the first faint beating of the pulse in a man who has been saved from drowning, tell that life is there. Some people wait for great demonstrations, and look for the powerful influences which others experience ; and consequently they miss what is as evidently a work of the Spirit, as true and real in them as though they heard the sound of the mighty wind of Pentecost. The Spirit descends as the Dove and the Dew, just as really as He does in the Fire and the Voice, and the influence of the dew as it falls in its quietness after a hot day is as irresistible and unmistakable as is the fire burning up the wood and the voice speaking with other tongues. The easy contentedness of those in whom the Spirit has not

striven, or who have grieved Him by not obeying His gentle whisper, is a position of greater danger than any, just as the painless condition after some fatal illness may only be the precursor of death. The cry of all such, and that which we should urge them to make, should be nothing else than 'Lord, give me Thy Holy Spirit,' for they are not even in a condition to ask for mercy as sinners, seeing that they are not aroused to see themselves *as* sinners. But when the Holy Spirit has convinced of sin, whether that sin be some fatal vice outward and seen, or secret and unknown, or the sin of the neglect of duties and the higher life of the soul; whether the conviction be powerful and loud, as it was to the Philippian gaoler through outward terror,\* or calm and quiet as it broke upon the mind of the Centurion at the Cross, who, seeing the sight, and hearing the loud voice of the victorious Saviour, was constrained to say, 'Truly this was the Son of God; †—in either way the conviction of sin is the work of the Holy Spirit, and, yielded to, the further steps in the 'way of Peace' are shown. It is the voice 'behind us saying, *This* is the way, walk ye in it.'

**Soul** As the detective lays hold of the fugitive from arrested justice and arrests him by warrant, so is the soul arrested as a rebel who has transgressed; as one who has

\* Acts, xvi. 29.

† St. Matt. xxvii. 54.

sinned, or missed the mark, that mark being the glory of God ; as one who is iniquitous or crooked, whose ways are '*wrung*' out of the straight way of God's Commandments ; the soul thus arrested is condemned by the law. 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law ;'\* 'the soul that sinneth, it shall die.'† But thus arrested and turning round, as conversion means, it sees a different sight than it feared : not the sight of retributive justice, but the vision of One despised and rejected, whose voice is heard saying : 'Ye have sold yourself for naught ; I have redeemed you without money : ‡ ye have no power to turn ; lo ! I am with you : a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you ; § I will save you from all your uncleannesses : fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine.'|| This is the voice behind us, this is the attitude of the Good Shepherd seeking His lost sheep, this is the position Jesus Himself takes as He 'stands at the door and knocks,' and offers to come in and sup with us. He says : 'If any man hear My voice and open the door, I *will* come in to him.'¶ It is the yielding of our will to the striving of the Spirit, the Spirit whereby we are

\* Gal. iii. 10.

† Ezek. xviii. 4.

‡ Isa. liii. 3.

§ Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

|| Isa. xliv. 1.

¶ Rev. iii. 20.

drawn, which enables us to open the door ; and there at the door we find the Loving Saviour, who has been standing long waiting for admission.

This is the second step in the way of Salvation. The **Voice of Spirit** will have striven, and we shall have **Jesus**, obeyed His voice ; the will is surrendered so far that we have been made willing in the day of His Power, and already have we turned to Him who speaks, and we have said as St. Paul, 'Lord, what wilt *Thou* have me to do ?' With the yielding to His voice comes the Power to obey, and our position is to 'stand still and see the salvation of God.' As we thus are arrested, or stand still, the voice speaks : 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'\* If the Lord Jesus could stand again upon earth, and if He bade us thus come to Him, how many weary and heavy-laden would steal with their burden to His feet ! If He were to have His place of reception at some distant spot, some Court of the Holy Temple at Jerusalem, how many would be the pilgrimages, how eagerly should we be found crowding the ways thereto ! And if added to this, many who had been met us and told us of healing done, burdens removed, weariness past, how much more readily should we press onwards ! But do we live by faith or

\* St. Matt. xi. 28.

sight? If by faith, then all that we should do if He were visibly present, we shall do though He is absent; for 'faith is the evidence of things not seen.' Still if the Spirit speaks to us—that is, when we *desire* <sup>Response</sup> *assurance of rest and peace, we should obey* <sup>of Soul.</sup> His call, and with all our weariness and burdens cry—

'Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee—

O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, and waiting not  
To rid my soul of one dark blot,  
To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot—  
O Lamb of God, I come.'

Just as surely as the woman, not content with pressing in the crowd, drew near and touched the hem of His garment, and was made whole,\* so will every soul yearning for healing and rest—who, perhaps, may have been to other doctors for cure and failed to find it, 'spent all'—time, opportunity, patience—and is no better, but rather the worse, as it is content with nothing else now than a personal contact with the Personal Saviour—kneel down and touch the hem of His garment, as it flows still on earth, and will go away cleansed and at peace. Weary

\* St. Mark, v. 25.

soul, sin-stricken soul, longing for holiness to which thou art a stranger, and peace thou hast not tasted ; thou who hast seen others go to Jesus and come away cleansed, as just now thou dost hear His voice calling, ‘ Come unto Me,’ and that most tender of all words, ‘ Come,’ sounds in thine ear like music from afar, long since silenced by the world’s coolness and hardness—obey the call as thou didst in those days gone by when it sounded from the lips of loved ones. Take Jesus at His Word ; He *says*, ‘ Come :’ say, ‘ Yes, Lord, I *do* come. Thy Spirit has drawn me, is now impelling me, Thy Love is held out to me, promising me “rest ;” it is rest I want, such as the world cannot give, such as I walk wearily to and fro to seek and find not ; I come to Thee ; Thou art here, Thou art True ; give me this rest.’

And can such a soul go away unblessed ? is there room for all the peradventures, the human conditions, surety of the far-off promises of peace ? Nay, listen, ‘ Him promise. that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out ;’ \* if, therefore, thou hast in obedience to His Word come to Him, thou *canst* not be cast out, and if not ‘ cast out,’ the only alternative is ‘ thou *art* received,’ thou hast taken God at His Word, the voice that called thee to come now welcomes thee, and in that perfect ‘ way of

\* St. John, vi. 37.

Salvation' He died to give thee, thou hast now thy assured, thy honoured place. And what is the ground upon which I take my place and upon which my soul rests? Surely it is that I receive at God's hands a gift purchased for me on the Cross, and kept for me in the hands of a Loving God until I am willing to ~~Salvation~~ claim it; for the 'gift of God is eternal life <sup>a gift</sup> through Jesus Christ our Lord.'\* Now a *gift* can only be received at the hands of the one who has to give it freely and thankfully. We cannot earn it, we often do not deserve it, the gift is all the more of favour when it is bestowed upon the greatest rebel, the most ungrateful. If some one purchases anything for us and leaves it at the shop where it was bought, and tells us to go and fetch it, we have nothing to do but to go and claim that which has been bought. Now it is 'whosoever *will*,'† that may come; the gift is free, it has been purchased for us by Jesus on the Cross, it is held out to us as we are willing to receive it, and all we have to do is to take it. And *what* a gift it is! Eternal life, with all that pertains thereto. Life, not death; freedom, not bondage; the children's home, not the slaves' dungeon. 'Christ our Passover *is* sacrificed for us, therefore let *us* keep the feast.'‡ What the Jews had to do before they were

\* Rom. vi. 23.    † Rev. xxii. 17.    ‡ 1 Cor. v. 7.

saved was to take of the blood of the Lamb that had been previously slain, and sprinkle it upon the lintel and the side-posts of their houses. So have we to accept as a gift the pardon wrought out for us on the Cross ; the Blood has been shed, we take the blood and has been appropriate to ourselves the benefit as we shed. sprinkle the blood on our hearts ; 'without the shedding of blood there is no remission,' the blood is between us and God ; there is now no destroying angel, God is reconciled to us in Jesus, and He beseeches us to be reconciled to Him.\* Amazing condescension ! that He should stoop to make such terms with us ; we had rebelled and turned everyone to his own way, and on Him the iniquity was laid ; He died, we go free, and as we go we take at His hands the gift of pardon and appropriate it as our own rightful possession. Freedom from the curse, freedom from the cruel taskmaster, freedom from Egypt, freedom to follow the Pillar of Fire and Cloud, freedom to enter our own land of promise !

Not only does this give rest from sin and its defilements, and rest in the possession of the Magna Charta of Freedom liberty assured to us, for 'he that heareth My assured. word and believeth on Him that hath sent Me HATH everlasting life, and shall not come into condemna

\* 2 Cor. v. 20.

tion, but is passed from death unto life ;' \* but the Holy Spirit points out new blessings day by day, and opens up new powers of usefulness and enjoyment. He 'reveals all things ;' † the heights of vision and the depths of love possible even for the vilest sinner and the coldest professor. He 'seals our redemption,' ‡ so that we are able to say of these promises of God's Word, 'They are true,' for I have proved them. He is the 'earnest of a future inheritance,' § for the more He does the more we see He *can* do, and the clearer our perception of His power becomes. We have thus had in the power of the Holy Spirit a personal transaction with God in this way of salvation ; listening to His voice, obeying it, yielding to it ; we have come to Him for rest ; we have received the gift, and the future is assured to us as clearly as is the present and past. All this, too, not on the word of man, but on the authority of God, so that all the manifold objections as to feeling and disposition are removed, and we are face to face with God, and what He says ; we have only to do with what He has done and what He requires us to do. Obedience is the first and last duty in the 'Way of Peace.' If He says 'Come,' we have only to obey ; the promise depends upon the obedience.

\* St. John, v. 24.

‡ Eph. iv. 30.

† 1 Cor. ii. 10.

§ Eph. i. 14.

If He says 'Follow,' we have only to follow ; as He bids us at first 'stand still,' and see what His hand has wrought, so He bids us 'go forward,' though the waters may roll between us and the object of our desire, though mountains of difficulty may hem us in, and the enemy may be sweeping up the valley behind us. At obedience to the word of command the waters will divide ; as the east wind blew of old, the waters were open on the other side before they were to the view of the Israelites. So on God's side the impediments are removed, and the act of obedience claims the Divine help. Step out boldly into the untrodden path, launch forth into the deep, and thou shalt find that God is true to His word, and thy soul shalt rest on His unchanging promise.

## III.—HINDRANCES REMOVED.

MANY people try to learn the advanced lessons of Christian life before they have rightly learned their *A B C*. They wonder why they cannot realise what others evidently enjoy, and why it seems so difficult to understand their Bibles, or trust God's word therein written ; whereas they have not yet learnt practically the simple alphabet of Christian knowledge. We are not born into the natural world in an adult state, but as infants ; and as the babe lies in its mother's arms, it gradually acquires through its opening senses the knowledge of things and relationships on which its wide eyes at first look out wonderingly. *We* pass through the same stages spiritually ; nay, we may also say, that as Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost in the womb of the blessed Virgin, His mother, so is the new life conceived in the soul long before it comes to light : for as there are 'first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear,' in the world outside, and as a long process preceded even the appearance of the

‘blade,’ so is there a period before even the infant life is seen, and yet all the time the Holy Spirit is developing a real work in the soul. As it grows and becomes capable of education, it has to learn its alphabet, and this it must learn in the rightful order. It has been said that the A B C of Christian life contains the whole of the early stage which we consciously learn :—

*A.*—‘All we like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned everyone to his own way ; and the Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all.’\*

*B.*—‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’†

*C.*—‘Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’‡

Nor can we learn these in any other order. Until we know and realise that we are like ‘sheep gone astray, having turned everyone to his own way’—that is, until convinced of sin—we shall not desire, as we ought and must, to lay upon the Lamb of God our sin. When we realise our sin and lay it on Him by the act of appropriation of the Blood, we are free to come to Him—yea, we have

Evils of already come to Him, and His promise of ignorance. ‘rest’ must be ours. But we shall not stay at our alphabet ! It is a sign of *ignorance*, not of advance,

\* Isa. liii. 6.      † St. John, i. 29.      ‡ St. Matt. xi. 28.

to suppose that all is done, because we have consciously taken our place in the covenant in which we were placed long ago. We have now assumed a distinct position before the Father, for we have yielded to the call of the Spirit '*to be* reconciled to God ;' we claim now our right to 'have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous : and He is the propitiation for our sins.\* We have now the Spirit as an 'earnest of our inheritance,' and in our feeble prayers and lives 'He maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.'† On this safe ground the soul may rest and be thankful, for the *position* is sealed to us by the Word of God ; but we only rest there that we may gain fresh strength and purpose for a higher climb. The mountain height is not gained so quickly by the one who thinks to reach it in half-an-hour, and goes up a series of precipitous rocks and steep gorges which exhaust the strength and bring into danger,—as by being willing to take, by what seems a circuitous route, the ascent slowly, making sure of each step and position before the next is taken. The Master teaches us that if we would build high and safely, it must be upon the rock : for though it is *easier* on the sand, and does not require the hard work that the rock demands, yet when the floods come and the winds blow,

\* 1 John, ii. 1.

† Rom. viii. 26.

the structure (otherwise perfect) fails to stand unless it has a secure foundation on the rock. To have a smattering of acquaintance with any subject is not to have such knowledge as shall bring power ; and just as surely as thinking we can do without learning the alphabet of religion, in knowing ourselves to be sinners, and Christ as our Saviour, will be time and opportunity lost,—so surely will it be a mistake to imagine we can learn higher lessons, unless we are willing to learn that as yet we 'know nothing as we ought to know.'

Another difficulty we have in this stage arises from **Evil of fear.** When Satan cannot keep us away by fear. either of the two great hindrances which he first uses, viz., 'That we are good enough, and have no need of anything more than we have ;' and secondly, 'That we are too sinful, and could not be saved without having first a long season of discipline and amendment ;'—he adds yet a third, which often opposes our progress at this moment of our experience : ' You are so weak that you must fall, and you will only bring discredit on the Christian name ; so you had better try remedial measures first.' But what is the object of the trust a weak one reposes in one stronger, unless it be to find strength in the greater power of the one on whom we lean ? Is not the soul on its way to the mountain of holiness described as one

‘coming up from the wilderness, *leaning* on her beloved?’\* and this leaning is the putting all our weakness away from ourselves on to His strength, and depending upon *all* His strength as Prophet to teach, Priest to intercede and pardon, and King to fight for and secure victory, that so perfect love, and trust that flows therefrom, may cast out all fear. Then, too, we are more likely to bring discredit on our Christian name by refusing to trust Him lest we should fall, than by trusting Him to keep us, come what may. If He can save, can He not keep?—and if the widow of Sarepta found the word of the man of God was true, so that the ‘barrel of meal did not waste, neither did the cruse of oil fail,’† shall not God’s own word be equally true—‘My sheep shall never perish?’ And if we doubt whether we are the sheep to whom this promise is given, the context describes the characteristics: ‘My sheep hear My voice, and they follow Me.’‡ The mark is upon the *ear* and on the *foot*; and in such a way of listening and following no danger can be, for in this way of <sup>Cure of</sup> *fear*. holiness, this direct and clear way, ‘no lion is found.’ So long as we are willing to hear and follow, the voice sounds still before us, ‘This is the way, walk ye in it;’ and *as we*

\* Cant. viii. 5.    † 1 Kings, xvii. 16.    ‡ St. John, x. 27.

follow and forsake it not for any bypaths of our own inclination, no danger can be ours ; and should we sometimes fear as regards the future, and think that it would have helped us more to have had all our own way supplied, instead of being bidden to pray for ‘ daily bread,’ we remember the danger in which the woman would have been if God had given her a six months’ supply instead of a daily increase ; for those around who had not any, in their famine state, would have soon appropriated this feeble woman’s portion, whereas a daily supply was that which saved her from robbery and want. We do not expect to see a man going to his work with dinner for three months on his back : he carries *each day* that which he will require. So does God give to us His promise : ‘ I will never leave thee nor forsake thee ; ’ ‘ As thy *days*, so shall thy strength be ; ’\* and as we have trusted to-day, so can we trust to-morrow ; ‘ grace shall be given *for*, or *instead of*, grace,’† grace for to-day’s temptation and difficulty, and grace for to-morrow when it comes ; for each fresh position and requirement fresh strength shall be found. If after bringing so many souls safe home the Lord Jesus cannot keep us, ours must indeed be a difficult case.

\* Deut. xxxiii. 25.

† St. John, i. 16.

Another difficulty arises from trying to fit ourselves into other people's experiences. How many try to crack hard nuts with infant gums? Evil of comparing ourselves with others. Satan knows perfectly how to suggest all sorts of difficult questions to those who are weak in faith ; and very often those who have escaped from bondage perish at some waters of strife. How clever people are in suggesting that our case is very like some other they have once known ; like the kind friends who suggest that scarlet fever is in the next house when we are feeling sick and feverish, or inquire affectionately if we have had any relations die of consumption, when we have a bad cough ! People tell us of experiences we do not have, and sensations we have not felt, and they leave us to draw the conclusion, or sometimes draw it for us, that because we have not the same we are not saved. Do not fall into despair because you have not all that others have ; be content to know that God has your case in hand, and will bring it out perfectly. He has a plan of life for each of us, and if we have only trusted ourselves to Him, He will deal with us as will be best for each. We have not to make a bargain with God, and say, 'If I have peace and joy I will serve truly.' Peace How peace is the result of trust and surrender, and does is realised. not precede it ; it is the declaration of God, when we

have laid down our arms of rebellion, and have come to His feet in obedience to the call of His Son ; and the soul has need to realise only this : ‘ My beloved is mine, and I am His.’\* *His* though I do not feel it, because I have yielded myself to Him ; *His* because I have given myself to Him, and I know I am safe in that gift. Take one step at a time ; do not try to be wise beyond that which is written, nor take your stand on any word of man ; let it be simply on the Word of God. The Holy Spirit has convinced of sin, and shown you your need ; He has raised the curtain and pointed you to the Cross of Calvary on which your sins are laid, and He has whispered, ‘ As far as the east is from the west, so far have I set thy sins from thee.’† These difficulties are simply placed in thy way by the great enemy of thy soul ; but thy Saviour is more than sufficient. He promises the Spirit to teach thee all things, so thy ignorance and blunders are only a reason for His drawing nearer to guide and instruct. He draws near to thee Himself that thy fear may be overcome by His perfect love, that He may show thee the path of life, and each step in it which He has marked clearly before. He plants Himself at thy side as thou dost face an unequal battle, and gives thee the surety that, as He overcame, so shalt thou !

\* Cant. ii. 16.

† Ps. ciii. 12.

'Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.'\* Let these difficulties make thee stronger, as thou dost face with earnestness and courage the way He would lead thee. Listening to such a voice shall we find the 'following' life is one of conquest and growing peace.

\* Josh. i. 9.

## IV.—POWER OVER TEMPTATIONS.

WHEN the soul realises that the difficulties presented in the Way of Salvation really arise from a need that the stamina of the new life shall be tested, and that the discipline by opposition and besetment is as necessary as the exercise of the body is to its growth, we are no longer troubled with the fear lest these difficulties are peculiar to our special case, or are meant to let us know that others can attain to that which is impossible to us. We find a reason for the 'much tribulation' through which we are to enter the kingdom, and perceive that this very breaking down of our natural desire, and the testing of our powers of faith and love, are part of that 'way' in which we are required to walk. Many wonder why we see more sin than Christian life and fight its battles, they see before more sin within themselves, and feel more the power of temptation over them, than they did in the old life ! But there is not less dust in a room long closed, after the shutters have been opened, than there was be-

fore ; we *see* it more clearly, but it was there all the time. If only a small portion of light is allowed to enter, only so much of the dirt is revealed as the light shines upon ; so the more the Holy Spirit enters the soul, the more it reveals the original darkness, and the more it discloses hidden motives and principles of evil. They have always been there, and the discovery of them does not prove that we are worse than before, but that the Holy Spirit is at work within, and as He convicts of sin and unrighteousness, so He reveals them that He may show us how to have them removed. It is the very moment we escape from bondage that is the point at which opposition begins. In this new life, the way the children of Israel were led out of Egypt is a type and symbol of the way we are led. God's covenanted people, but *yet* in bondage, sending up a cry that reached the ears of God ;—the cry of groaning under their burdens, a restless yearning for something, they know not what, is just the position of the soul in outward covenant with God, yet in bondage to the world, the flesh, and the devil ; crying out in felt weariness and misery, but knowing not what it cries for :—

An infant crying in the night,  
With no language but a cry.

The Deliverer is sent, but even against this God-sent aid the natural man resists ; led out more by fear than

drawn to sacrifice by love ; rebelling in the face of difficulties at the Red Sea ; and before the songs of triumph at the destruction of the Pharaoh they feared have died away, murmuring at Marah, and yearning for the flesh-pots in the wilderness of Sin. So will there meet the

**Opposing forces to progress.** soul the three great forces of the world, the flesh, and the devil ; these three surging waves that broke over the Master in the Jordan valley of His temptation, and in which He 'suffered, being tempted, that He might be able to succour those that are tempted.' As the flesh was presented to Him in the temptation to make the stones bread, in order that natural hunger might be appeased, so is there a tendency in the spiritual life to satisfy the natural will, the self-life, by applying supernatural power. As the world-spirit presented itself to Him in the temptation to cast Himself down from the Temple pinnacle in order that He might prove the power of God to keep, so are we tempted to exercise a self-power, and call it 'trust in God !' when a natural way out of a difficulty is shown to us. As Christ, too, was tempted by Satan with 'the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them,' if He would but acknowledge the power opposed—tempted, that is, to obtain the end of His mission without the Cross, whereby that end was to be gained—so are we often beset with the desire

to obtain the end of our call without the bearing of the Cross ; to gain heaven, if it may be, without the struggle and conflict whereby alone the crown is gained. Before the Israelites the Pillar of Fire and Cloud were sent, and when the people yearned for less hardship, even though it might mean also less freedom, this guiding Hand led 'towards the wilderness ;' so the Sacramental Presence ever guides the Lord's Host towards the wilderness of Cross-bearing and struggle, and the purpose must ever be to bring us closer to Him with whom to suffer is also to reign. The Amalekites have no power while the Saviour pleads ; it is to God's honour and His glory to bring us safely through ; He gives us a daily sacrifice for daily sin, and each opposing force is only a way for Him to show His greater power. God did not keep the Israelites from being attacked by those among whom they went, but exactly at their moment of extremity He brought them through ; so, still, He does not allow His people to be without temptation, but gives them His strength to overcome.

The *world* is a great force against the soul's progress ; and we mean by the *world* all that Christ <sup>The world force</sup> meant, and no more. He did not separate <sup>overcome by</sup> Himself from the social aspect of life ; He <sup>deeper love.</sup> did not follow the asceticism of His forerunner, but was

found at the marriage feast of Cana, the supper in the house of Levi, and in the home of Bethany. He chose from the beauties around the texts for His sermons, and found closest communion with His Father on the hills of Palestine. Yet was the world opposed to Him—whether it was the religious world of the Pharisees or the sensual world of the Herods, for He lived a life *above* the world ; He used it as its master, and caused it to minister to His joys and needs, but He allowed not its *spirit* to obtain possession. How often do we find that the glosses of society and the conventionalities of life make this world-spirit our master, and we float onward under its mesmeric power until we are awakened by the sharp cry, ‘Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.’\* How often too does the thought arise :—‘Oh ! such words cannot belong to this day ; they were the utterances of St. John ; he was too devotional for this practical age !’ Stay ;—St. Paul was a practical apostle, and yet he classes among those who are ‘*the* enemies of the Cross of Christ’† those who ‘mind earthly things ;’ and St. James, more practical still, speaks in stronger terms than any : ‘Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the

\* 1 John, ii. 15.      † Phil. iii. 18.

world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.\* How often do we find Christians arguing the question as to how far the world may be enjoyed! Surely the answer is contained in Our Lord's Prayer:—'They are not of the world, *even as* I am not of the world.' The '*even as*' is the measure of the world's power and allowed influence, and just in proportion as we set ourselves to accept the *position* of a Christian do we find that He overcame the world, and we have, by faith in Him, 'the victory that *overcometh* the world.' But it is quite impossible to make any rules on this subject, for it depends entirely upon how far we have a love and devotion that is of Christ, as to how far we shall be able to rise above the present. A child will hold to its dirty stick or dangerous plaything until it is offered something better. It is only as we take hold of the 'better part,' and receive in its fulness all Christ wills to give us, that we find how empty and foolish are our old delights. 'I have a religion,' one once said, 'that enables me to have as much of the world as I like.' 'Have you?' was the reply; 'where did you get it, and how much does it give you?' 'It is the religion of Jesus Christ; I accepted it with the love He gave with it, and I don't have the world because I

\* James, iv. 4.

don't like it.' The better part had been chosen, and *that* could not be taken away.

The *flesh* is our next besetment and opposing force, ~~The fleshly in-~~ and, perhaps, this is more insidious because ~~stincts subdued~~ it opens the doors of inclination; and if ~~by new life~~ within. these were closed, the temptation from without would have little power. Though we may have been delivered from the penalty of sin, we may yet be subject to its power; there is still the 'law of the members warring against the law of the mind,' and this conflict is not imaginary, but mightily real, and causing continual grief and sorrow, as constantly we are finding that when we 'would do good, evil is present with us;' and that in the best actions there is such a mingling of sin, such impure and carnal motives, that the holy act and service becomes unholy. But we must not forget that there is a positive and aggressive warfare in the spiritual life as well as one of defence. 'The flesh lusteth against the spirit,'\* this we know and feel only too plainly and painfully; but the 'spirit lusteth against the flesh,' this we are inclined to forget, but it is none the less real. The new life begotten within us by the power of the Holy Spirit is like a child all untaught and weak, and this life is attacked by a power that may be represented by a

\* Gal. v. 17.

bully in a school, who has no real courage, but who can tyrannise over the little boys ; but as the young life grows and is trained by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it learns those ways of warfare, to 'fight, not as one that beateth the air,'\* but systematically and wisely, until the old carnal nature is subdued ; the bully is set upon and conquered, and ever after the power of the new life is realised. It is of no use to sit down and bemoan the besetments to which we are liable ; we want to remember that the new life begotten by the Spirit within us *is* conquering and will conquer, and go forth in brave spirit to co-operate with that mighty power within, until the flesh is subdued, and Christ is all.

But we shall also be subject to the direct and personal attacks of the *devil*. His first and greatest weapon will be the making us <sup>The devil's suggestion</sup> ~~gestions kept~~ in control. doubt our power to conquer ; unbelief is that which paralyses the soul, and prevents its laying hold of the Hand and Power of God : he would let us look at our infirmities and besetments, our falls and failures, instead of going forward determinedly to overcome them ; if only he can persuade us to dream and long for holiness, or murmur and sorrow over falls, instead of setting ourselves with vigour and earnestness to over-

\* 1 Cor. ix. 26.

come, the victory will be as complete as though he led us into acts of sin. He will, too, present temptations suited to each individual character ; he is far too good a tactician, and has been far too long employed in these arts, to use the same temptations for all, for our characters are so diverse, that a sin common to one would have no power over another,—so that to thank God we are not as other men in some respects, may only be made the means of another form of sin in ourselves. Who is able for these things, who shall make us sufficient to resist these manifold and varied attacks ? Only the same Power that once overcame them ; the mighty Presence of Him who has said, ‘My grace is sufficient for thee, My strength is made perfect in weakness.’\* ‘All power is given to Me. Lo ! I am with *you*.† If He is with us as our complete sacrifice, our powerful Advocate, our Brother and Friend, these temptations will lose their power ; the waves will roll over Him but will not touch us, for we shall be hidden beneath the Rock.

Go then in His strength, and thou too shalt conquer as He conquered ; the world shall cease to charm or enslave, for thou shalt have laid hold upon that which is a higher impulse than the world ; its pageants can never affect the soul dead to them and entranced by a nobler

\* 2 Cor. xii. 9.

† St. Matt. xxviii. 18-20.

vision ; the flesh shall cease to draw thy soul down to the lower life, for the leaven of a spiritual influence shall be leavening the old carnal state, and the temple of thy body shall resound ever with ' holiness to the Lord ; ' the devil will have little power, for the Holy Spirit will make thee wise to resist ; and clad in the panoply thy God supplies, thou shalt by thy faith in God put to flight all other foes. The very opposition shall send thee closer to thy God, and in His power victory shall be gained.

## V.—PROGRESS ASSURED.

THE soul, as it advances in Christian life, will find the conditions of all natural life apply to its state. All around we realise *movement* and *fertility* as the two signs of signs of real life, and these are just the two that *progress*. in the life of the soul we have to aim to express. *Movement*, for no real life is stationary ; the plant and child alike grow through stages and periods ; and if there is no progress it is a sign at once of weakness or death. *Fertility*, for all life tends to fruit-bearing, and the very nature of the plant requires the presence of leaf and blossom to pass, that fruit may remain. The fig-tree bearing no fruit was cut down ; and the individual life, if it bears not fruit, is only fit for the burning. But to progress there will ever be a parting from much that before seemed necessary—there will be a willing or compulsory separation from the ‘things of the child,’ and a gradual satisfaction with deep principles rather than shallow feeling. When the soul enters its first conscious realisation of rest in Christ, it often passes through

sensible joys and raptures ; it sings its song of deliverance on the shore of the Red Sea, overjoyed that the bondage is past and the Egypt left. But between this period of thankfulness and praise, and the Canaan of settled possession—the uplands of steady faith and wide prospect—there lies the wilderness-way, with its difficulties and dangers ; often a weary journey across <sup>Not always</sup> desert sands, under Sinai peaks, and amid <sup>seen</sup> thunders and awful voices, and a Cross standing <sup>outwardly</sup> out clear and marked at every fresh turn. And often along this way the soul, realising the solemnity of spiritual loneliness, ‘alone, yet not alone,’ thinks it is going back, and shudders at the near approach of the rolling waters of a Red Sea it imagined long ago left behind. It is always desirable at such times to go back to the first principles, the ground upon which we trusted Christ ; and well is it for us in such moments if we can trace the ground of our first confidence to the *Word of God* rather than the *voice of man*. It is so easy under strong personal influence to trust Christ, because led by some powerful human will, rather than on the intelligent acceptance of the truth as the Holy Spirit reveals it. We must ever remember that Christ said, ‘ Every plant that my Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be

rooted up ;'\* and we must take care *our* planting be not by parents however good, guides however wise, pastors however holy, associations however strong, but by the Spirit of God, Who takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us. Take this as your standing, and your life will be safe and secure ; go back to the position you took on the Word of God, lay fast hold upon some Scripture on which you rested for your soul's salvation ; and though you may tremble on the Rock, the Rock will not tremble under you. It is quite possible to part with sensible rapture and leave it behind, as we did the uproarious gladness of our childhood, and yet be really more holy and nearer to Christ ; for we are 'walking in the light,' and our real 'life is hid with Christ in God.'† Not that we should ever be content to lose the gladness of Christian life, for the ways of real religion are 'ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace ;'‡ and we must ever remember there is no necessary connexion between gloom and piety, or between sanctimoniousness and true God-likeness, but we should not be disturbed or cast down if we have not the joy we once had, if only the *ground* of our trust is right : the garden in autumn is not so gay as in spring and summer, but it bears more

\* St. Matt. xv. 13.    † Col. iii. 3.    ‡ Prov. iii. 17.

fruit ; the brightness of the flowers may fade, but the seed is being formed to bless future years and give wider brightness *in* some coming spring.

This progress out of sensible rapture to real principle will be tested by *fertility*, or fruit-bearing. How often we hear the lament, ‘ My love for Christ is not so deep as it was in the first months of my conversion ; *then* I thought I could lay down my life for Him, but, alas ! for the influences which have now dimmed my devotion.’ But this is by no means a safe rule of measurement. Is the love of husband and wife less as years roll on, because they do not exchange the passionate expressions of the first moments of betrothal or marriage ? Does the wife doubt the husband’s fidelity or devotion because he may be absent from her side for a time ? And is it not possible for the love to grow deeper as years roll on, though the expressions are not so extravagant and the sensible presence not so vivid ? Are not these only too gladly parted with, if in their stead there comes the calm and quiet confidence of rest in His love ? The test of love is, how far we can give up self and life for His sake—not how much we can gain of present peace by and through His love : it is a poor love indeed that only exists as its own pleasure is ministered to. The real strain on the chain of love is when

all is expected *from us*, and we receive nothing in return. This was Christ's love, and this will be the measure of ours.

Readiness to yield to the *law of obedience* will be a Willing sign of our accepting the principle of our new God's will. life. Not self-opinion and human conceit, nor requiring to know the reason of all we cannot understand—for that will be seeking to grasp the infinite wisdom with the finite mind ;—but an acceptance of the law of God as our rule of life, leaving the enigmas to be explained presently, with the faith that is content to believe that 'what He does we know not now, but we shall know hereafter.' How many difficulties will then be overcome, how many questionings will thus be silenced ! If He bids us obey, we shall obey ; the cross we are bidden to take may be heavy, the command to 'come out and be separate' may seem hard ; the direction to marry 'ONLY in the Lord' may come across some dearly-prized human affection ; the crushing of self-will in yielding body, soul, and spirit, may be difficult ; the giving up the worldly possession, or the cherished idol, may require a severe struggle ; but 'in the keeping of these commandments there is great reward,' and without this obedience there will be no evidence of fertility.

Another test of love will be the *confidence* we repose

in the One to whom we have yielded ourselves. How often, as the nobleman who wanted healing for *Trust in* his child,\* we will not believe unless we see *darkness*, signs and wonders ; whereas the very moment Jesus says to us, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee,' that is 'the very moment we take Him at His word, and trust Him *on* His word ; and that very hour the fever of sin departs, and we are cleansed. How much time we waste, and how many opportunities we miss, because we do not trust *absolutely* the love that *can* only desire our good. The mists hang around the mountain-side up which we climb, and all things become exaggerated ; and hence our alarm. Jacob cried, 'All these things are against me,' when he thought Simeon was lost to him, Joseph dead, and Benjamin about to be carried away ; whereas each of these troubles was imaginary—for Joseph was the deliverer, Simeon the hostage of promise, and Benjamin's going the means of finding all he wanted. So when the way seems hard, the path obscure, let us have confidence in our God, and go steadily forward. It is not given to us all to see things clearly and at once ; the man whose eyes Jesus opened, only saw at first 'men as trees walking ;'† but Jesus told him to look up, and he saw plainly ; so if only we 'look up,' the Cross will stand out

\* St. John, iv. 49.

† St. Mark, viii. 24.

plainly before us with all its wonderful mystery of apparent failure ; but by it and through it we shall see 'the joy set before Him,' and before us, as we press onward to the prize. To produce fertility in the vine many a goodly branch has to fall, many leaves have to be cut off, and the bunches of grapes themselves have to be disfigured, that greater size and beauty may be gained ; so have *we* to lose much that seems at present to be necessary : many hopes and longings, even of the highest kind, have to be cut down ; the very fruit of holiness we have been trying to produce has to be purged from wrong motives, and be searched through by God's Word, until there seems little remaining ; but it is that *real* fruit fit for *His* taste may remain. Blessed are those disciplines and heart-searchings, if only they give us confidence in Him who is only working for our good, and who would draw us upward to holier life, and make us bring forth fruit that shall remain.

Do not imagine that you make no progress, because <sup>Real</sup> these things seem against you, and because <sup>progress.</sup> your life seems less rapid in its growth now than once it was. As the sun rises above the eastern hills, it seems to make more rapid progress than when it moves slowly along in the mid-day ; but its pace, or rather our pace, as we move around it, is uniform and

steady; so the life of the soul may seem more rapid at first, than after years of toil and struggle; but we want to measure progress not so much by the height to which we reach, as by the things which we leave behind; and as we gaze below and see the old points at which we remember hesitating, the old difficulties once so apparently insurmountable, the old hindrances once so formidable, all now far below, we thank God and take courage, for it is His hand that has led us, His strength that has enabled us, His pardoning love that has forgiven us; and He will perfect that which concerns us. Waste not precious moments in idle complaint or useless regrets; lay hold of that for which you are apprehended of Christ Jesus, and 'old things will pass away, for all things will become new.'

## VI.—LIFE FED.

**A**S the soul leaves behind the first elements of its new life, and rises to higher things, it becomes conscious of a yearning towards more direct and personal contact with Him from whom its life is derived. The slavish fetters that once held it, the nervous fear that often tempted a fall, the doubt and distrust of earlier days, give way to the glorious liberty of the children of God, and to peace and joy which flow therefrom. In the earlier stages it is so natural to trust in something short of Christ,—to be content with outer service, even when the heart is not in close communion, to look at the nature and intensity of the *trust*, rather than the **OBJECT** of the trust ; but as the soul advances in the Way of Salvation, it reaches towards a close union with Him, in whom its true life consists, and nothing satisfies it save a very near and intimate walk with Him. And this close union is quite compatible with the most busy life,—for Enoch, who ‘walked with God,’ was one who had public duties ; he was the seventh from

Close union possible for all.

Adam,—the leading man of the time ; he was too a family man, and had divers cares and responsibilities ; and he lived at a time and in an age when there was little around to secure the calm stillness we suppose to be necessary to a holy walk. Yet *he* ‘walked with God,’ and doubtless, in that lovely fellowship, he bathed his soul in the calmness of the nature of Him with Whom he walked, and drew nearer daily to the consummation he longed for. So will the soul delighting in the Lord be freed from the strong bands of outward life, from the snares of position and society, from the cares of family and surroundings, and from the harassing attacks of the world and its hindrances ; and it will be withdrawn into the inner sanctuary, and be kept in the secret of His pavilion. In that chamber wherein the soul meets its Beloved, there will be taught it the secret of *abiding* strength, and it will drink in the fulness of the supernatural life Jesus imparts to His own. As we are grafted into the Vine, we receive the very life of the Vine, and He comes to us and dwells *within* us, and this supernatural life flows to us by reason of the union we have with Him ; and when, as we have traced in these ‘Instructions,’ we have become partakers of the Divine nature by accepting Him through whom it is bestowed, we as really receive, in this new life of grace, power to live and

grow, as in our natural lives we received the strength for our development from childhood into manhood.

The channels through which this grace flows are manifold,—for the ‘Spirit bloweth where it listeth ;’ but

Holy as blessing always follows in the way of Communion. obedience, the first and obvious means whereby true life is given, is in the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, which was given as a means of communicating the life of Christ to the souls that had been brought into vital union with Him. Exactly as it is impossible for a dead person to receive food, and the measure in which living persons will be benefited by the food they take will depend upon how far they are in a healthy condition, so is it against reason that Christ should give His food to those who are not yet quickened, or that those who are not in spiritual health should receive the fulness of blessing of which others are conscious. This is the reason why some do not receive a conscious power through this channel of communication, and that some are sickly and weak. To become true partakers of the wondrous life-giving power in Holy Communion, we need to be awakened to a lively faith in Christ, and to have a quiet, trustful confidence, in His power and willingness to give to us this bread to eat. We do, however, sometimes eat and drink with an earnest longing, and a

true preparedness of soul, and yet find no *conscious* presence *at the time*; but this is not by any means a proof that we do *not* get the blessing, for we are not conscious of the value of food to our bodies when we take it—it is only as it becomes strength in us for future duty that we find the value of it: so with the spiritual food we receive, when we rightly and duly, with a sense of our shortcomings and sins, our needs and our temptations, draw near to the feast of love, we may not always be conscious *at once* of the strength, but it actually and really becomes power and force in our inmost being; by it the old life dies and the new life lives and grows, the self-life gives place to the Christ-life, and as the scaffolding of earthly things is taken down, we begin to realise what is the power of the new life Christ little by little has been building up within. We stay not here to point out dangers that may arise from undue or unwise use of this means of grace; but in directing souls in the way of salvation, we can say most confidently that those souls grow most graciously and safely, not in self-opinion or in outward profession, but in real, true Christ-likeness, who esteem highly and use most constantly this blessing which Christ bestowed on His Church in His last hours, and in the daily use of which the Apostles and early disciples were strengthened for their warfare, and 'did eat their

meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people.'\* If this is not our life, we shall soon find the profession without reality ; good resolutions will be broken, early promises will not be fulfilled, and the life will become an empty name. Obedience is one of the first duties of the Christian, and *obligation* is soon lost in a fuller measure of love,

The same will apply to the supplies of spiritual life God's word received in the study of God's Word and and *prayer*. prayer ; in the one we learn the Father's mind and will, in the other we hold communion with Him, and receive into our souls the strength we need for our battle. The direction as to the progress of the struggle, the encouragements for our sometimes severe warfare, the cautions and warnings as to our mistakes and failures, all come from the letters our Father sends us ; and we want to study God's Word, not that we may be clever at fencing, or adroit in argument, but that we may know the mind of God, and learn how to walk with Him in every difficulty and danger. So prayer needs to be far more to us than the repetition of words long since learnt, or the hasty utterances which a sense of duty brings forth ; not the asking for the grace of holiness and the influences of the Spirit in such a careless way that we

\* Acts, ii. 46, 47.

should be astonished to receive an answer in some chastened temper and subdued will, but it should be to us a positive communion of our weakness with His strength, until in our feebleness we realise that God is getting Himself glory, and in the utter and entire prostration of our self-sufficiency we are lifted up to 'sit with Christ in heavenly places.'\* Then do we rise strengthened and prepared for the battle, and the powers of darkness flee before the new life Christ has given us; we live in Him before God for our justification, He lives within us for our personal holiness, we are 'changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.'†

When thus we live the life of God and are fed by these supernatural powers, which transfuse the Effect on self-life with the bright radiance of the Light life. from Calvary, until, like clouds in the setting sun, the glory of that closing act of the drama of redemption deluges every soul drawn within its influence:—then our faces will shine like that of Moses as he came down from the Mount, unconsciously, but really reflecting the life we are living. If we *are* thus living, the witness we give will be clear and distinct; as the first thing we ought to do when we have found the lost piece of silver

\* Eph. ii. 6.      † 2 Cor. iii. 18.

is to call our friends and neighbours together to rejoice with us, 'to go home and tell them what the Lord has done for us,' so should the reception of the supernatural life be so manifest in us that people may 'take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus.' So shall there be an ever-increasing power even in the weakest life, the most stammering tongue will be eloquent with silent witness, and the most despised and persecuted life will have its own influence on the world around.

Then, too, will work for God become easy, and necessary to our very spiritual existence; instead of *Impulse for work.* the law of compulsion we feel under, wherein work is difficult, and our power to do it small and insufficient, we shall have risen into the regions of loving force, wherein we are *constrained* to do something for Him who has done so much for us: it will not be hard duty, but the sweet and willing offering of devotion, and the life within us will banish the self-effort and dispel the clouds of doubt and distrust. Our work, springing from the right motive, will have the Spirit's power within it, and it will ever be laid at the feet of Him for whom it is done.

Thus have we traced the way the Lord leads His *Conclusion.* children. Out of the bondage of sin and fear,

through the Red Sea of redeeming grace, past the wilderness of discipline, under the lessons of the Sinai of obedience, the pillar of fire for ever leading, the manna from heaven for ever falling, the enemies of the Lord ever conquered, until the land of possession is gained, and entire rest is ours.

Sin-tossed souls ! listen to His voice who calls you to find rest in Him ; learn of Him in His Word, in His dealing with those who like yourselves creep to His feet, longing for something—you know not what, praying for something, yet no words to express your need ; take hold of His *call* and His *promise*—both are true, both are yours, both will bear the strain of all the weight with which you may lean.

Struggling soul ! beset by dangers without and fears within—conscious of earnest strivings to be free and yet of weakness preventing your rising—see your Saviour pleading for you, and let your fears and doubts, your hesitations and trembling, vanish before the powerful assurance that He is ‘with you always.’ Listen to the cry, ‘Go forward,’ and before you the waves will open, and upon the slippery stones of the way you are led the light of God, leading you, will fall.

Weary soul ! ‘faint, yet pursuing,’ if the battle seems unequal, go more and more to the supply of all your

strength, and you will find that as Christ gives you His supernatural life, the inward consciousness, constant and abiding, of His presence, will be more than sufficient for you ; each height you climb will give you a wider view, you will breathe a clearer atmosphere, and strengthened and invigorated you will mount up once more, until, as the noise of the battle sounds further and further away as you are wrapt round by the stillness of God's presence and close love, you take the last step, your vision becomes clear, your hopes are realised, your love is perfected, and you enter into the gates within which are written words of wondrous sweetness to weary strugglers : ' Ye shall go no more out.'

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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